

Arguments/Remarks

Applicants hereby confirm the withdrawal of claims 9-21 as discussed during a telephone conversation of December 19, 2005. In this reply, claims 1-3, and 5-8 have been amended. Claim 4 has been cancelled.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-4 and 6-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Applicant's Admitted Prior Art ("AAPA") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,272,600 to David H. Carey ("*Carey*"). Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection for at least the following reasons.

As for independent claim 1, claim 1 has been amended to include, among other things, the features "a signal layer including a first and a second signal trace located along a first plane, each of the first and second signal traces comprises a first segment with a first segment width, and a second segment with a second segment width; a reference layer located along a second plane that is substantially parallel with the first plane coupled to the first and the second signal trace, the reference layer includes a slot substantially parallel to the first and second signal traces, the slot comprising a first portion and a second portion having a first slot portion width and a second slot portion width, respectively." Applicants submit that AAPA and Carey, individually or in combination, do not disclose or suggest such features. That is, the Examiner in the Office Action alleged that the AAPA disclosed all of the features of original claim 1 but acknowledged that the AAPA did not disclose "a first reference plane including a first slot," which the Examiner alleged as being taught by Carey. However, Carey, at best, only teaches to place first slots (between references 16 and 20 of Fig. 1) in the same first plane 14 where the first and the second signal traces 18 are located, and to place second slots (between references 26 and 30) in a second plane 24, wherein the second slots are specifically taught to be orthogonal to the first and the second signal traces 18 of the first plane 14. See Fig. 1, and col. 5, lines 12-57 of Carey. Thus, Carey **does not** teach or suggest "a first and a second signal trace located along a first plane . . . a first

reference layer located along a second plane that is substantially parallel with the first plane . . . the first reference layer includes a first slot substantially parallel to the first and second signal traces” as recited in claim 1. For at least this reason, claim 1 is patentable over *AAPA* in view of *Carey*.

Claim 4, as previously alluded to has been cancelled, and therefore, this rejection as it relates to claim 4 is moot. Claims 2-3 and 6-7 depend from claim 1, incorporating its features. Thus, claims 2-3 and 6-7 are also patentable over *AAPA* in view of *Carey*.

In the Office Action, claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over *AAPA* in view of *Carey* and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,547,405 to David R. Pinney (“*Pinney*”). Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection for at least the following reason.

Claim 2 depends from claim 1, incorporating its features. The deficiencies of *AAPA* and *Carey*, as described above as they relate to claim 1 are not cured by the teachings of *Pinney*. For at least this reason, claim 1, and in turn, claim 2 are patentable over *AAPA* in view of *Carey* and in further view of *Pinney*.

Claims 1 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over *AAPA* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,828,555 to Takumi Itoh (“*Itoh*”). Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection for at least the following reason.

As for claim 1, claim 1 has been amended to include the features “a signal layer including a first and a second signal trace located along a first plane, each of the first and second signal traces comprises a first segment with a first segment width, and a second segment with a second segment width; a reference layer located along a second plane that is substantially parallel with the first plane coupled to the first and the second signal trace, the reference plane includes a slot substantially parallel to the first and second signal traces, the slot comprising a first portion and a second portion having a first portion width and a second portion width, respectively; and wherein the first and second portions of the slot correspond to the first and second portions, respectively, of

the first and second signal traces." Applicants submit that such features are not taught nor suggested in *AAPA* and/or *Itoh*. That is, *Itoh* was cited for the proposition that it teaches in Figs. 5 and 6 a first reference plane 34 including a first slot 40 substantially parallel to a first 33 and a second signal trace 33B. However, neither *Itoh* nor *AAPA* teach or suggest a slot comprising "a first portion and a second portion having a first portion width and a second portion width, respectively; and wherein the first and second portions of the slot correspond to the first and second segments, respectively, of the first and second signal traces" as recited in amended claim 1. For at least this reason, claim 1 is patentable over *AAPA* in view of *Itoh*.

Claim 8 depends from claim 1, incorporating its features. Thus, claim 8 is also patentable over *AAPA* in view of *Itoh*.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-3, and 5-8 are in condition for allowance. Early issuance of Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any questions, he is invited to contact the undersigned at 503-796-2099.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge shortages or credit overpayments to Deposit Account No. 500393.

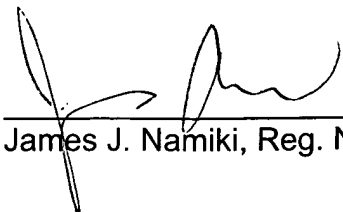
Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: _____

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